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RIVAL INTERPRETATIONS OF CHRISTIANITY

I. CATHOLICISM

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Christianity is the name commonly given to the religion that came into existence through the career of Jesus of Nazareth and professedly preserves his character to this day. Christianity is a religion; that is, the name stands for a way in which men seek unitedly to come into communion with the eternal and invisible, a way in which they attempt to enter into happy relations with the Supreme Being. It is a historical religion; that is, it had its beginnings at a definite period of human life in this world and the course of its progress from age to age is traceable. It is a religion whose votaries aim at honoring the worth of him from whom it sprang by calling themselves by a name that designates his supreme place among men—Christ, Anointed of God, Sent of Heaven, King of their hearts—Christians, Christ-ones.

When the historian unfolds before our eyes the manner in which this mighty spiritual movement has spread throughout the world and continued through the centuries, our attention is transfixed and our thought is challenged. What is it? What does it mean? Its phenomena are so vast and so varied and its followers have differed so much among themselves that at times one is tempted to say that there is often little or nothing more than the name in common. Yet even the possession of a common name is significant. The name may supply the clue to the true interpretation of its character. At any rate, for the intelligent man the attempt to interpret it is inevitable.

The interpretation of Christianity is not exclusively the work of the scholar and philosopher. For the home of this religion has not been mainly in the highplaces of human life but more especially in the lives of the common people. They have given the most abundant interpretation of it. The conscious interpretation of it by the professional thinker is dependent on the popular, half-involuntary, half-conscious interpretation that is offered in the ways of the masses of believers—their spontaneous religious speech, acts of worship, songs, prayers, modes of conduct, customs of assembly, and methods of organization. The thinker must try to account for these things.

The interpretations of Christianity that have appeared are numerous. In our survey it will be necessary to pass by many that are of only minor interest and limit our study to the great outstanding types. We shall select five—Catholicism, Mysticism, Protestantism, Rationalism, and Evangelicism. These overlap and mingle, of course, but they are sufficiently distinct to stand apart in our study.

It is always hazardous for one who does not accept a place within a given religious communion to attempt a characterization of it. He seems to be at a disadvantage compared with a member of that communion. In the case of Catholicism the disadvantage is negligible, because the complex of forces and

events comprised within it covers a period of eighteen centuries and affects vast areas of the earth and countless millions of people. On the other hand, the interpreter who has personally felt the impact of the religious power that is resident in Catholicism but does not feel any compulsion to justify its claims has a distinct advantage.

The word "catholic" is from the Greek and means universal. Its employment as a designation of a Christian communion seems to have occurred for the first time in the second century of the Christian era. The Christian gospel had been preached widely in the Roman Empire and beyond, with the result that many local religious associations had been formed under the Christian name but differing so widely in the traditions, customs, and doctrines they held that there was danger lest the new faith be shipwrecked in the storm of general religious confusion. Many there were who strove to hold to the original, simple, but picturesque message of the early Jewish preachers. Others welcomed the new faith as furnishing older popular faiths with a higher meaning and sought for a philosophic comprehension of it. Others, again, tried a middle way. Controversy and division multiplied. There was danger lest the gospel be lost in a medley of realities, speculations, fancies, and superstitions. It was amid these circumstances that, under the leadership of such men as Ignatius of Antioch and Irenaeus of Lyons, an effort was put forth to stem the tendency toward disintegration by laying down a few broad statements purporting to be the invariable tradition held by the true churches the world over and constituting

the apostolic standard of truth. In this respect, they said, the churches were all at one; in fact, they were one church. This one church—the church catholic—was alone the true church. Differences, therefore, came from without. Universalism was set up against individualism, authority against speculation and discovery, law against freedom. This is the beginning of Catholicism.

During these eighteen centuries Catholicism has passed through three main stages of development. In those early times, when its main strength lay in the regions adjacent to the Eastern Mediterranean, where the Greek language was the principal medium for the exchange of ideas and Greek-speaking Christians were the principal leaders in the thought and action of Christendom, there grew up the Eastern, or Greek, church, so called, with its cultivation of "mysteries," its profound metaphysical speculations, its great creeds, and its episcopal organization. Later, when the faith spread through Western Europe, and its center of gravity was found at Rome, the custom of the Roman church became the standard for the West, and in the work of reducing the new threatening chaos to order there grew up the great mediaeval system of ecclesiastical administration with its headquarters in the "Eternal City" and its agents in every political center and every public place. Here stood the Western, or Roman, church over against the Eastern, or Greek, church, with a deep cleavage between them. Finally, when the free national, industrial, commercial, intellectual, moral, and religious forces that had been kept for a time in subjection by the Roman church got

beyond control and in Protestantism found a larger life outside the Church of Rome, she found herself mainly occupied in retaining the allegiance of those who still remained within her communion and in resisting Protestant attacks. Then appeared the reactionary, conservative, anti-modernist papal church of the present. Thus Catholicism has passed through three great stages. The schism between East and West made two mutually antagonistic churches, both of which, nevertheless, claimed to be Catholic. Then the Protestant revolution brought into existence many anti-Catholic Christian bodies that have disputed successfully with her the sovereignty of the Western world. Catholicism and universality have long since ceased to be synonyms. Catholicism is now the name of a sect.

Notwithstanding the wide differences that have appeared within Catholicism during these many centuries, there still remains a link of identity uniting the past and the present, and the most striking characteristics of Catholicism from the beginning remain. In discovering these we must remember that, while there is much of keen invention in Catholicism, the system is not so much an invention as a growth. For convenience let us consider it in its four main aspects—as a type of piety or religious life, as a form of morality or conduct, as an institutional system or church, and as a philosophy or body of doctrine.

1. Catholicism as a Type of Religious Life

In this study we shall beware of drawing our inferences mainly from

official acts and pronouncements, but we shall remember that the heart of Catholicism, like every other kind of religion, is found in the minds of the multitudes of its common people. Its rites and ceremonies, its rules and regulations for action, its great institutions, and its doctrines have come into being in response to real or imagined popular needs or demands. What, then, is the kind of piety that is cultivated among the Catholic masses?

Observe, at the outset, the attention that is paid to worship. There are its places of worship, all constructed, as far as possible, with a view to arousing and cultivating certain emotions—its churches, basilicas, and cathedrals erected on eminences or other conspicuous sites, with lofty towers and spires pointing heavenward, with massive walls and lordly pillars, with spacious assembly rooms, long-drawn aisles, high ceilings, and softly dimmed light, with their far-off, railed-in altars, burning candles, and floating incense. All these have a meaning that cannot be set forth in mathematics or the formulas of science or in the terms of common utilitarian purposes, for they tell of movements of the secret soul within the man.

There are its objects of worship. They are many, as in polytheism and idolatry, but with a difference. Foremost and above all they worship God as one God but in three persons—whatever those words may mean—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This is the highest kind of worship, known as *latria*, which we may translate “adoration,” and is offered to God alone. In this worship there is no familiarity, but that deep

submission and silence of the spirit as it views as from afar the Incomprehensible and Infinite who cannot be known in himself but only in his persons or the manifestations of his essence. Lower than this worship is *dulia*, or the service and veneration which may be rendered to those lower beings whom God has signally honored and through whom he manifests a portion of his glories. First of these is the Virgin Mary, who receives *hyperdulia*, or the higher veneration given to those who are only less than the divine. Saints, or holy men and women, in great number are objects of this lower worship and through them both prayer and praise are offered to God. When the heart, depressed with its sense of sin, fears to enter into the divine presence, it turns to those who have sinned as we have and yet have been purified, and importunes their intercessions with God. The demand for these mediators is constant in Catholicism, for it seems that without them there is a lack of the sense of the mercy of God. New saints are being canonized from time to time, altars and shrines are being erected to them where their votaries may find the blessing of fellowship with them and their help. From this step easily follows the consecration of holy places, holy articles, and holy relics which tend to awaken the pious feelings of the Catholic votary and to assure him of the divine favor.

In keeping with these are the modes of worship. In order to excite the appropriate emotions, statues or shrines are erected in honor of the Savior and great saints, and before these the devotee prostrates himself or presents his offerings in order to find favor and peace.

Pictures are suspended in places of devotion, representing the deeds or sufferings of Jesus or Mary or other hallowed persons, and by gazing upon these the desired benefit is obtained. A similar effect is produced by looking upon or touching the relics of saints and martyrs. Or, without the use of a material image, the soul may be excited to high impulse by meditating on the happiness of the blest in paradise or the miseries of the wicked in hell or of those whose crimes are to be expiated in purgatory. Again, a series of devotional acts may be prescribed, such as the repetition of a prayer many times in succession, perhaps with the help of beads to keep the count. But chief of all the methods of arousing the spirit of devotion is the performance of sacraments. These cannot be spoken of here in detail, but mention may be made particularly of the sacrament of the Eucharist with its culmination in the Mass. The supreme miracle is witnessed by the beholder when he sees the Host elevated before God as the sublimest act of self-sacrifice and devotion and feels that in it Christ is being still offered to God and the offering is accepted. So long as the sacrifice of the Mass is continued, so long is the soul for whom it is offered in the way of salvation. It is quite in keeping with this practice that crucifixes are distributed among the people in order that the remembrance of the suffering of Christ for them may stir their hearts to love and gratitude.

It is characteristic of the Catholic worship that the human and the divine are conceived as brought together, not in a natural way—for they are not conceived as naturally one—but in a

supernatural way. The philosophy which underlies and supports this view will be referred to later. Meanwhile this outstanding feature of Catholicism is to be kept in mind. In keeping with this the emotions characteristic of Catholic piety fall into two main classes, namely, those connected with the idea of the divine and those connected with the idea of the human. When the human and the divine are conceived as united, as in Christ, there is excited the feeling of tender sympathy and compassion. The human career of Jesus abounds in events that invite the worshiper to try to imitate his deeds and repeat in himself the very emotions that Jesus felt, even in his agonies connected with the crucifixion. Here, however, the divine in the human is what gives sanctity to the experiences of the sufferer and makes them valuable for men. The worshiper is willing to go the way of the cross with Jesus and share his sufferings. Thus the suffering Redeemer God becomes the center of devotion:

O sacred Head now wounded, with grief
and shame weighed down,
Now scornfully surrounded with thorns,
thy only crown!
O sacred Head, what glory, what bliss till
now was thine!
Yet, though despised and gory, I joy to call
thee mine.

The unity with Jesus which the Catholic seeks is an emotional unity.

When the divine is regarded as separated from the human it creates the feeling of awe or fear and foreboding. Thus even Jesus Christ becomes a dread judge whose sentence is feared and whom the worshiper seeks to placate through the intercessions of Mary and the saints.

If God is adored as Father, he is not so much the Father of men as the First Person of the Holy Trinity, the Father of the Son, unknown to any but through the Son, and too far away for comfort to flow from the thought of him. The Holy Spirit is not so much a joyful presence in the soul as the mysterious inspirer and renewer, also beyond and away.

The contemplation of human nature apart from the divine excites emotions of unhappiness, self-contempt, or revulsion. It is the opposite of the divine, whether, as in the Eastern church, it be viewed as the finite, ignorant, erring, and perishable over against the infinitude, omniscience, holiness, and immortality of God; or whether, as in the Western church, it be viewed more particularly as the disobedient, selfish, impure, and guilty transgressor of the divine law. Consequently the Catholic feels that human nature is to be repressed and humiliated, and he may resort to the wearing of filthy garments and the neglect or the affliction of his body so as to reduce it to subjection to the spirit. Whatever human nature may have been at the creation, it is now fallen and corrupt, and ought to be despised in the presence of the divine.

Thus the Catholic emotional experience oscillates between two poles, the sublime contemplation of Deity far removed from men and their ways, producing both a longing after God and a shrinking from his presence, and the dissatisfaction and disgust produced by the consciousness of human weakness and sin—fitting anticipations of the vision of heaven and hell in a world to come. This emotional contrast is both

the strength and the weakness of Catholicism—its strength, because it begets in some those all-consuming aspirations which enable them to endure the greatest privations and to reach the highest achievements in the way of mental concentration; its weakness, in that the constant uncertainty and vacillation prevent the power of initiative from making itself supreme in the life, but leave men ready tools for the purposes of others.

What, then, is the character of Catholic hopes and aspirations? The deep sense of the reality of another world, unseen by man and separated from this world by a veil that no natural power of human vision can pierce—a world whose reality is the opposite of this world, whose worth is infinite and eternal in contrast with the fleeting and delusive character of the things in this present world—issues in the desire and hope of receiving here and now some token or sign from that world, some gift of good that more than makes up for the loss of all things here. Hence the cherishing of belief in voices, visions, dreams, apparitions, signs, and omens coming from the better world into ours. But the inevitable disappointments that must weaken these aspirations lead to a seeking for some tangible or visible instrument or vehicle for the transmission of the heavenly gifts, and, consequently, there arises a superstitious regard for certain places, articles, outward acts, days, or seasons that carry with them some secret and mysterious blessing. High spirituality and a low materialism are ill-matched companions, but they are commonly found side by side in the Catholic type of religion.

2. Catholicism as a Type of Morality or a Form of Conduct

The dualism that is characteristic of the religious spirit of Catholicism reappears in its morality, and naturally so, since morality at its highest is true religion. As in Catholic piety there is seen the union of high spiritualistic devotion and a crass materialistic worship, so also in its morality, alongside of exclusive devotion to the aims that spring out of the sense of the supreme worth of the invisible world, there is a place for a low compromise with sordidness and sensuality. There is room for both the ascetic and for the worldling.

In order to understand Catholic morality we must first apprehend its ideal of life. It is suggested by such scriptures as the following: "Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth . . . but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven." "Be not anxious for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, nor yet for your body what ye shall put on." "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness." "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whosoever would save his life shall lose it and whosoever shall lose his life for my sake shall find it." "And everyone that hath left houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or children, or lands for my sake shall receive a hundred fold and shall inherit eternal life." "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. . . . For this corruptible must put on incorruption and this mortal must put on immortality. But when this corruptible shall have

put on incorruption and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying, Death is swallowed up in victory." "If ye live after the flesh ye must die, but if by the Spirit ye put to death the deeds of the body ye shall live." "Set your minds on things above, not on things on the earth." Ever before the high Catholic imagination there floats the image of "the city that hath the foundations whose builder and maker is God," the city that is lightened by the glory of God and into which "there shall in no wise enter anything unclean." The Catholic "saints" are the men and women who have abandoned everything for this higher state into which they hope to come.

There can be little doubt that it was the sufferings, and especially the martyrdoms, of the early generations of Christians that gave this ideal its pre-eminence. Great was the exercise of soul through which those devoted people succeeded in holding fast to their faith in the presence of some awful form of death. The highest exercise of faith seemed to appear in the act of renouncing life itself. Thus the martyr became the ideal Christian. The strain and excitement of those days led to the semi-worship of martyrs and the veneration of their relics. Paganism and Christianity were fused. Other-worldliness became the characteristic Christian virtue and it was especially manifested in the grace of renunciation. When times of great prosperity came to the Christian community and the growth of worldliness became a source of alarm to the purer spirits, there was in consequence an artificial attempt to preserve the

martyr ideal and to fulfil it even when there was no persecution of men to the death. Where suffering was not compulsorily forced upon them from without, it might nevertheless be enforced from within. The value of voluntary suffering was exalted and salvation was made dependent upon it.

Naturally, therefore, the suffering Savior became the example of the highest morality. His renunciation of his heavenly glory, his renunciation of the goods of earth, his want even of a place to lay his head, his renunciation of natural kinships, and, finally, his renunciation, on the cross of shame, of his own pure life involved a demand upon all his followers that they also should suffer voluntarily—for so did he. The mediaeval Christ was the Divine Sufferer and the mediaeval Christian was he who suffered with him and for him. Suffering was glorified. The meritoriousness of voluntary suffering and the cleansing power of penitential suffering became axioms of mediaeval ethics.

The life of the ancient hermit became the real model. Retirement from the world, abandonment of its pleasures and sins were marks of the highest morality. To attain to them human society itself might have to be discarded on account of its contaminating influences. The monk (the one who lives alone) became the typical Christian. Hence the clergy, as holy men, were obliged to adopt the monastic ideal. The regular clergy laid down the law for the secular clergy. But the secular clergy met a double temptation, for while they had to contend with the inner impulse that wars against the soul, they had the additional inducements to evil

that come from without. Hence the sternness of the discipline to which they were subjected. A large part of the history of the internal affairs of the mediaeval church is the story of the effort to carry this policy into effect despite the pleadings or recalcitrancy of human nature in the priests. They were compelled formally to renounce the world, the flesh, and the devil. In the course of the long and bitter struggle that the imposition of this injunction involved, the emphasis naturally fell upon the negative side, and from the eyes of busy men whose hands were full of ecclesiastical politics the vision of the heavenly world almost disappeared.

Renunciation, therefore, is the pre-eminent Catholic virtue. It has three principal forms, according as the natural world, human flesh, or the lordship of Satan may be in mind—poverty, chastity, and obedience. This trinity of virtues is one and inseparable. They are all incumbent on both sexes—for alongside the monk had long since appeared the nun, a competitor with him for the heavenly reward. They are incumbent on all, but not in equal degree, for there are some frail members of humanity who can adopt the ideal only in part. Those who come short of the full requirement shall have a lower place at the time of the heavenly reward.

The vow of poverty is a judgment passed on the striving for earthly wealth and power and the clamor for worldly honor. Personal possessions are renounced and, like the birds of the sky, man's dependence is placed on the gifts of providence and human charity. The monk, with his shoeless feet and his

begging-bowl, is the emblem of this virtue. Poverty of dress and dwelling reveals his poverty of spirit. His is the Kingdom of Heaven. The mediaeval church had the good sense to perceive that this could not be demanded of all and met the weak half-way by accepting a partial renunciation of goods in the form of gifts to the church, or a limited asceticism in the observance of fasts and holy seasons, or a performance of penances for errors and misdeeds, or some worthy deed in support of the church's enterprises. Those things would put them in partial possession of the monk's virtues. At times a great wave of popular feeling carried multitudes toward a fuller compliance with these demands. The mediaeval crusades, on their better side, were a magnificent tribute to the power which the idea of the value of renunciation of earthly good exercised on the minds of multitudes in a hard and brutal age. It was a time of unparalleled renunciation of external goods for the sake of an ideal—though, alas! the ideal was a perversion of the true.

The vow of chastity is a judgment of condemnation passed upon the natural appetites and passions. It was supported by the Augustinian theory that original sin is propagated through concupiscence, which is thereby made out to be the root of all sinning. This vow brought the ascetic into conflict with his inner nature. The battle had to be fought alone. The fight against nature was a bitter one, indeed, and was often fought under the depressing weight of a soiled conscience. The very struggle against the passions seemed to intensify them, for passion is strongest when the

thoughts are turned toward it. Moreover, the struggle against the proclivities of the flesh brought men into conflict with the habits and feelings that gather around the life of the home and find their nourishment within the family circle. But the renunciation of the delights and the loves of the home was made into a virtue. The home life was put on a lower level than the life of the celibate, and marriage itself was put under the ban to the extent that it was regarded as a sinful relation apart from the sacrament which removed the evil of it. Even so, the married man and woman were made inferior to the celibates. Marriage was rather tolerated than honored. The highest sanctity could be found only in the state of celibacy. The long struggle of the papacy to enforce the law of celibacy on the clergy is well known to historians and need not detain us here. The excruciating agonies of many celibates—their fastings, their flagellations, their torment of their bodies by the wearing of such garments as hair shirts, perhaps with iron barbs pointing inward, and other artificial methods of diverting the thoughts from evil imaginations are familiar; and so also is their failure.

The human heart must have its recompenses. It found them in those days and does so still. Priests, deprived of the solace of natural affection, found in the Virgin Mary a substitute for a human bride. Nuns, robbed of the opportunity to lavish their affections on a real human lover or children of their own, pictured themselves as the brides of the Lord Jesus and in ministry to destitute children found an outflow of tenderness. Even so, the natural crav-

ing for mutual love remained unsatisfied and often broke through its bonds, as the story of Abelard and Heloise so forcibly reminds us. Moreover, it must be said that the charms of motherhood triumphed over the hectic glow of virginity, for the graces of Mary that attract the admiration and longing of the masses of Catholics do not turn out, when analyzed, to be the graces of celibacy but the graces of motherhood. Mary stands for pure motherhood after all, and not for a desolate virginity.

The vow of obedience is of even higher rank than the vows of poverty and chastity, for as soon as Christianity is identified with an ecclesiastical order obedience embraces them both. It stands for the renunciation of both intellect and will. It involves assent to the church's teachings, compliance with her ritual, and conformity with her rules of life. It is the prostration of the whole personality before its superior. Its fulfilment would, presumably, remove all disorder and rebellion and make all revolution impossible. It canonizes the principle of order.

3. Catholicism as an Institutional System or Catholicism as a Church

The early days of Christianity were characterized by the spontaneity and sense of inspiration which accompany all great religious revivals. The hazards which invariably associate themselves with freedom were rapidly multiplied as the new faith spread. The sense of inner unity which was sufficient to secure a fair degree of coherency among all Christians at the first soon became an inadequate protection against the

tendencies to spiritual disintegration and confusion. Some kind of government was needed in order that some kind of order might be preserved. This need was intensified by the sufferings of Christians at the hands of the populace and the civil authorities. Leaders competent for the task appeared and in time welded together the majority of the members of the religious communion into a compact organization which succeeded in drawing to itself the loyalty of the Christian multitudes and in withstanding the grinding persecutions to which from time to time believers were subjected. It won the respect of the Roman authorities and finally the far-seeing Emperor Constantine succeeded in virtually incorporating it with the other instruments of the imperial government.

The churches had now become the church—if we do not count the numerous heretics that remained outside the new corporation and maintained for a long time a vigorous polemic against it. It embodied the Roman imperial spirit and naturally took on more and more the forms of the Roman administration, though with different names. When the church divided into an Eastern and a Western church, with territorial boundaries following pretty closely the lines of division between the Eastern and Western empires, the government of the two churches became differentiated according to the types of political authority prevailing in the East and the West respectively. The Eastern church became an ecclesiastical hierarchy after the aristocratical pattern with its heads in the many metropolitan cities. The Western church, with only one great

metropolitan center, carried the tendency to centralization of authority farther and became an ecclesiastical hierarchy after the monarchical pattern. There were many fathers, or popes, in the East, but only one Father, or Pope, ultimately in the West. To us Western people he is known simply as the Pope.

The course of events through which this development was brought about or the study of the actual position of the Roman Pope today need not occupy our time now. The fact of the evolution and its dependence on the exigencies which arose with time are the significant things which first attract attention, but it is important to remember that to the thorough Catholic neither of these is of special account or, perhaps, even true. For him the church as an organization is essential to Christianity—indeed the church and the Kingdom of God, or Christianity, are identical. The whole order is of divine institution. The works of (pseudo-) Dionysius the Areopagite, with their supposed revelation of the heavenly hierarchy upon which the earthly hierarchy was presumably modeled, succeeded in impressing on the minds of the credulous the belief that the church as an institution, in the form in which it now exists, is the divine institute of salvation. Outside of it there is no Christianity. It is an axiom of Catholicism, "Without the church is no salvation."

Christianity is, therefore, in the end a matter of government. Everything else in it must be interpreted from that point of view. The monastic vow of obedience is characteristic of the entire system. The whole complex of ascetical

practices gets its value thence. The penitential system of the church is a method of administration. The ritual is observed as an "office" and its features have official validity when observed with a view to doing what the church does. That is, official authority alone can give validity to any act of worship or service. The very virtues and graces which appear in the lives of men are real only when they issue from the church's administrative acts in sacraments. The doctrines of the church are all essential to salvation because assent to them is the condition of participation in the church. They are viewed by the Catholics, not as utterances of truth in itself and for its own sake, but as authoritative enactments to which the sacrifices of our intellect must be made. In short, the church is an institution, divinely ordered in all its forms, to which is committed the charge to bring men into the Kingdom of God by her sacraments, so that her sovereignty over the souls of men is exercised over the whole of their natural life and continues in the case of her members even into the world beyond, terminating only at the Judgment Day.

The great "notes" of the true church—unity, universality, apostolicity, holiness—find their true interpretation here. Unity: the church is one, not because of a spiritual experience common to all the members, but because she has one sole authority, speaks with one voice, and conforms all to one end. Her unity is really uniformity, formal rather than vital. Universality (catholicity): the church embraces all the saved, not in the inclusive sense which we might give to the words by saying that wherever there

is a saved man there is the church, but in the exclusive sense that none is saved except those within the church. Apostolicity: the church is legally constituted by divine legislation, in that Jesus Christ, true God, committed his power and right of government to his apostles and they have transmitted it to their successors in the apostolic office without defilement and without break in continuity to the present, and forever. Her rule is unquestionable and absolute. Holiness: the church stands apart from, and on a different level than, all other institutions, in that all saving grace is deposited in her as an institution. This is not to be understood as meaning that all her members are actually morally pure, for many are notoriously impure. It means that in her sacraments and all her official acts there is a mysterious, heavenly quality which effects the redemption of all who receive them. Her pope and all her priesthood are holy, not in the sense that they are truly good men, but as officials. A man might be a bad man and be a good priest or a good pope. The efficacy of the office in no sense depends on the character of the man who officiates in it. Salvation is wholly a matter of church.

4. Catholicism as a Philosophy or Body of Doctrines

Catholicism is not so much a philosophy as it is an order of life. Its interest in philosophy is secondary. For the spirit that governs philosophy is the love of truth and its characteristic activity is inquiry, investigation, speculation. By contrast, Catholicism is fearsome in regard to inquiry and seeks to regulate it in the interest of an

established order. Its characteristic attitude of mind is receptiveness, and of will, submission.

Yet it has a use for philosophy and has never hesitated to avail itself of the help philosophy can give. It resorts to philosophy as a means of vindication rather than as a weapon of attack. Its philosophy is apologetical in aim, conservative in temper, and suspicious of every new movement of thought. Its theology, in consequence, is opportunist in principle and refrains from setting forth an entire system of doctrines (dogmas). While it professes to have come into possession of a complete body of dogmas by tradition, these are held partly in reserve, and particular dogmas are announced only as occasion calls for them. If one examines the Catholic creeds, canons, and decrees, beginning with the Apostles' Creed and ending with the encyclical *Pascendi Gregis*, he will find that they seek, not so much to furnish the people with positive doctrines, as to warn them against current heresy. The declarations of councils and popes on these matters commonly conclude with anathemas.

While the attitude of Catholicism toward contemporary philosophy has varied from age to age, we may say that the relations of early Catholicism with secular philosophy were much more intimate than those of later Catholicism, when Catholic Christianity has become strictly institutional. Early Catholic thought absorbed the mystical and metaphysical spirit of the times, while later Catholic thought turned to the practical necessities of church government. The former sought to vindicate the idea of salvation by mysteries

(sacraments) and issued in a theory of the universe. The latter sought to vindicate the idea of salvation through the mediating action of the church and issued in a theory of the government of the world. The two are mingled in Catholic orthodoxy.

The Catholic theory of the universe is, in brief, that there are two worlds, disparate, separate, and distinct. They may be variously named—the natural and the supernatural, the physical and the spiritual, the earthly and the heavenly, the secular and the holy, the temporal and the eternal, the human and the divine—according to the point of view from which they are considered. In the lower of these two worlds darkness, error, sin, and death are found; in the higher, light, truth, purity, and immortality. Man belongs to the lower, but has longings for the higher and by redemption may attain to it. He is unable of himself to rise to it. For while his faculties fit him to know the lower world and even to infer from it the existence of the Supreme Being of the higher world to whom this lower world owes its existence, he is unable to know the character of that higher world by the exercise of natural powers and, for this, he is dependent on a supernatural communication.

At this point the theory of the world becomes a theory of revelation and redemption. There come from time to time, in ways altogether beyond our finite comprehension, supernatural communications, miraculously attested, from this higher world, and with them also supernatural bestowments of ineffable power. The instruments of these communications are holy, inspired men, and

particularly selected portions or articles of the natural world containing in themselves the mysterious potencies which purify and immortalize our souls. He who subjects himself to these holy instruments will be saved.

When these mysterious powers became concentrated in the hands of a hierarchy possessing the sole right to administer them, this early metaphysic became intertwined with a philosophy of human history. This is virtually given above in the theory of Catholicism as church. It is a theory of government, divine and human. The government of the heavenly world is immediately by God and his angels, but the govern-

ment of the earthly world is mediate and is ministered through divinely ordained and consecrated agencies. These instruments of the heavenly government are given authority over all natural forms of government and carry out through them indirectly the will of heaven, while in the distinctively supernatural activities on earth the church alone has a right to rule. A system of rewards for merit and of punishments for sins, valid for this world and the heavenly world as well, thereby comes to light and is put into execution. This has now come to be the Catholic interpretation of Christianity.

IS CHRISTIANITY'S SUCCESS THE CHURCH'S UNDOING?

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The title of this article is certainly paradoxical, yet it is well to bear in mind that it covers an exceedingly important field. It is at least intellectually possible to believe in the gospel and distrust the church. In fact, it is the position in which very many persons find themselves. We particularly commend to pastors the question with which the article closes.

The success of Christianity, to be fairly judged, must be tested by both quantitative and qualitative standards, by extension and intension. Two questions—How widespread is Christian control among the peoples of the earth? and How completely has Christianity gained control in the individual?—need to be answered. Let us think in

turn of Christian geographical control, control in the world's magnetic field, social control in so-called Christian lands, and then of Christian personal control. This gives some idea of the standing of Christianity today expressed in terms of control. Then we shall ask how this process of continuous succeeding is affecting the church—organized